

Message Text

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AFDROUGHT, OTTAWA FOR MYERS PASS CIDA

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SUBJECT: VIEWS ONSHORT TERM ASSISTANCE NEEDS IN SAHEL

REF: STATE 016090

1. TOTAL DONOR ACTIONS IN MAURITANIA, PARTICULARLY IN GRAIN CONTRIBUTIONS, WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN STAVING OFF STARVATION OF LARGE NUMBER POPULACE. INCREASED PRECIPITATION DURING LATTER 1974, IN COMPARISON WITH FOUR PREVIOUS YEARS, RESULTED IN INCREASED HARVEST PROSPECTS. THIS DID INCREASE CONFIDENCE, PARTICULARLY OF FARMERS/HERDERS, THAT DROUGHT WAS QUOTE OVER UNQUOTE. PRINCIPAL GIRM OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, RELUCTANT MAKE THIS ASSUMPTION. FARMER/HERDER CONFIDENCE IS EVIDENCED BY LARGE NUMBERS THESE NOMADS MOVING FROM THEIR ENCAMPMENTS AROUND POPULATION

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CENTERS TO ORIGINAL HOME AREAS.

GIRM EFFORTS ON AREAS MENTIONED IN REFTTEL FOLLOWS:

A. FOOD PREPOSITIONING: MINHEALTH, IN ROLE AS COORDINATOR FOR EMERGENCY PROGRAMS, HAS ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS GRAIN TRANSPORT CHIEF TO PREPARE FOR MOVEMENT OF 60,000 MT GRAIN DURING JANUARY/SEPTEMBER PERIOD, BOTH FOR PURPOSES OF IMMEDIATE FOOD CONSUMPTION AND FOR PRE-POSITIONING PURPOSES. DETAILED PLANS OF EXACT QUANTITIES TO BE TRANSPORTED EACH REGION ARE STILL BEING WORKED ON AT MINISTER LEVEL. PLANS ARE TO BE FINALIZED IN FEBRUARY 1975. MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, OF FOOD GRAIN HAS BEGUN IN SMALL QUANTITIES AND WILL BE WITHIN CONTEXT OF OVERALL PLAN FOR FOOD DISTRIBUTION.

MAJOR PROBLEM IN PREPOSITIONING REMAINS THAT OF TRANSPORT. GIRM TRUCK FLEET CONTINUES SHOW EVIDENCE SIZEABLE PERCENT OF VEHICLES OUT OF SERVICE FOR REPAIR DUE DIFFICULT ROAD/CLIMATIC CONDITIONS. AS RESULT OF NUMEROUS DONORS CONTRIBUTING VARIOUS BRANDS OF TRUCKS, SPARE PART PROBLEM IS COMPLEX. DROUGHT MAINTENANCE FACILITY FINANCED BY UNICEF AND USAID (WITH PARTICIPATION OF GERMAN AID) NOT YET BEGUN DUE LACK DECISION BY GIRM ON FINAL GARAGE PLAN. MINHEALTH EXPECTS THIS DECISION SHORTLY. UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, COMPLETION OF GARAGE WILL HAVE APPRECIABLE EFFECT ON MAINTENANCE DURING COMING TRANSPORT SEASON.

MINHEALTH EMPHASIZED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE ARE HOPES FOR GOOD CROP HARVESTS THIS YEAR, CAUTION MUST BE TAKEN. AS AN ASSURANCE, MINHEALTH PLANS IMPLEMENT PRE-POSITIONING TO MORE REMOTE AREAS IN CASE CROP ANTICIPATIONS PROVE INACCURATE, THUS NECESSITATING USE OF THESE PRE-POSITIONED RESERVES FOR CONSUMPTION BY POPULACE. MINISTER INTENDS UTILIZE MOST STOCKS IN COUNTRY FOR CONSUMPTION, USING PIPELINE SHIPMENTS ON ARRIVAL FOR RESERVES, TOGETHER WITH ANY EXCESSES OVER LOCAL CONSUMPTION IN FOOD PRODUCING AREAS.

B. DISEASE INCIDENCE MONITORING: CONVERSATIONS WITH MINHEALTH, HEALTH MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND WHO PERSONNEL INDICATE THAT DISEASE MONITORING SYSTEM EXISTS AND IS OPERATIONAL. REPORTS ARE TRANSMITTED BY UNCLASSIFIED

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RADIO FROM REGIONS TO MINISTRY. WHO PERSONNEL EVALUATED SYSTEM AS SATISFACTORY, AND BOTH MINISTRY AND WHO FELT REPORTS WOULD ENABLE PREVENTIVE ACTION BE TAKEN ON TIMELY BASIS. MINHEALTH COMMENTED THAT MAURITANIA HAD HAD LITTLE PAST EXPERIENCE OF EPIDEMICS EVEN WHEN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES EXPERIENCED THEM. HE STATED THIS DUE TO CLIMATE AND, PREVIOUSLY, TO SCATTERED NOMAD POPULATION. POPULATION IS NOW MORE CONCENTRATED AND, WITH RESTRICTED DIETS, IT IS

MORE VULNERABLE TO SOME DISEASES. HE COMMENTED THAT WIDESPREAD VACCINATION PROGRAM BEING CARRIED ON AS WELL AS PROVISION OF VITAMINS TO AFFECTED GROUPS. WHO FELT AVAILABLE VACCINE STOCKS IN COUNTRY ADEQUATE FOR HANDLING PROBLEM.

C. PROTECTION OF IN-COUNTRY DONATED FOOD SUPPLIES. MINHEALTH AGREED ON NEED FUMIGATE NOUAKCHOTT, ROSSO, AND REGIONAL WAREHOUSES HOLDING RESERVE STOCKS. ASSESSMENT BY OSRO EXPERT OF STOCKS AT ROSSO AND NOUAKCHOTT INDICATES MOST STOCKS WILL NOT NEED FUMIGATION IF MOVED WITHIN TWO MONTHS TO FIELD. NECESSARY FUMIGATION AT NOUAKCHOTT AND ROSSO WOULD BE DONE OUTSIDE WAREHOUSES, SINCE STOCKS ARE TO BE MOVED OUT RAPIDLY. WAREHOUSES THESE POINTS WOULD BE FUMIGATED WHENEVER NEW RESERVE STOCKS ARRIVE. STOCKS MOVED FROM THESE POINTS WITHIN NEXT TWO MONTHS WOULD EITHER BE ISSUED FOR CONSUMPTION OR FUMIGATED IF PLACED IN WAREHOUSES AS PART OF WAREHOUSE RESERVE FUMIGATION PROGRAM. PLAN USE INITIAL SERIES OF FUMIGATIONS FOR TRAINING GIRM PERSONNEL IN FUMIGATION TECHNIQUES, SINCE PRESENTLY NO IN-COUNTRY CAPABILITY THIS FIELD. WILL CONTINUE EMPHASIZE NEED REGULAR FUMIGATION PROGRAM IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN STOCKS IN PROPER CONDITION.

D. PLANT PROTECTION STRATEGY TO MINIMIZE 1975 CROP LOSSES: GIRM OFFICIALS, PARTICULARLY MINRURAL DEVELOPMENT, AWARE OF NEED FOR PROTECTION OF CROPS DURING 1975. WFP REP HERE WORKING WITH GIRM OFFICIALS ON THIS. INFORMED BY MINHEALTH THAT PESTICIDES ALREADY ON ORDER BY MINRURAL DEVELOPMENT.

E. CONTINGENCY MEASURES TO ACCOMMODATE NOMADIC GROUPS WHICH MAY CONGREGATE FOR ASSISTANCE DURING APRIL/SEPTEMBER 75: AS UNCLASSIFIED

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OUTLINED IN PARA (A) ABOVE, FOOD STOCK RESERVES (PRE-POSITIONED) TO BE USED FOR SUCH CONTINGENCIES. ALSO EACH URBAN CENTER HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR CERTAIN AREAS TO BE BLOCKED OFF FOR NOMADIC ENCAMPMENTS IF THIS IS NEEDED.

2. EXPERIENCE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY PROVE GOOD TEACHER FOR HOST GOVERNMENT IN STRENGTHENING ITS RESPONSE CAPABILITY. MAJOR PROBLEM REMAINS, HOWEVER, OF SO FEW OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH TOO MANY RESPONSIBILITIES. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY BY THESE OFFICIALS IS NOT COMMON DUE TO THIN INFRASTRUCTURE. TO IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE, TRAINING OF PERSONNEL ESSENTIAL. ANOTHER POSSIBLE MEANS OF FOCUSING GIRM'S ATTENTION ON PROBLEMS IS BY A UNITED DONOR EFFORT WHICH HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT LACKING IN PAST. WFP REP INSTRUMENTAL IN KEEPING MINHEALTH ABREAST OF GRAIN PRO-

BLEMS. THIS IS HOWEVER, INADQUATE IN VIEW OF TOTAL SCOPE OF PROBLEMS. DONOR COORDINATION NOW TAKING SHAPE BUT ON INFORMAL BASIS AND NOT FULLY ORCHESTRATED WITH GIRM.

3. GIRM INTEREST IN IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM EVIDENCED BY ITS PROJECT PROPOSAL TO AFDB IN 1974 FOR PURCHASE OF RADIO EQUIPMENT. THIS PROJECT, IF APPROVED, WOULD IMPROVE RADIO CONNECTION BETWEEN NOUAKCHOTT AND REMOTE REGIONS OF MAURITANIA.SHINN

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